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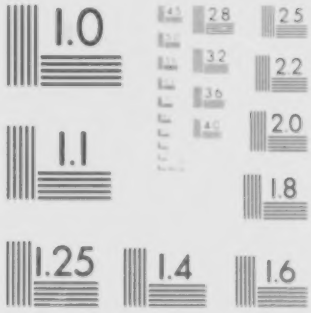


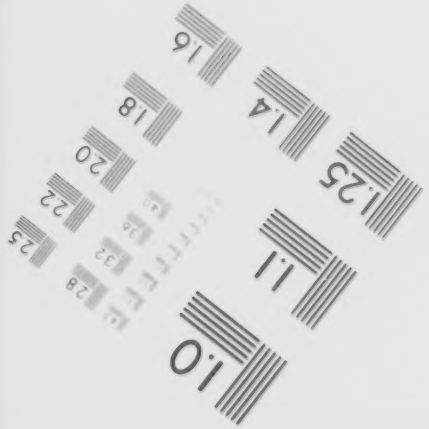




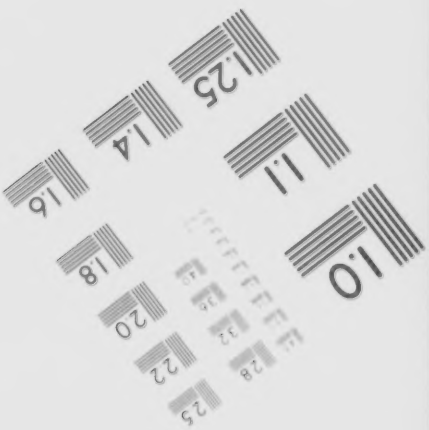


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ABSTRACT

This study examined selected perceptions and background demographics of 14 at-risk African American female adolescents in their relationships with 1 African American adult female who served as their nonfamilial, long-term mentor. In some cases, the mentoring relationship lasted as long as 21 years. The research focused on whether or not mentoring was truly effective for this group, and whether it should extend beyond an academic focus. Findings suggest that nonfamilial mentoring of at-risk African American female adolescents enables them to have higher life aspirations. Most of the mentees went on to complete high school with a grade point average of at least 2.0, and many went on to college. The study also shows that a critical element in a mentor/mentee relationship is the intimacy of trust given and received. Another conclusion is that mentoring is a very complex relationship in which the mentor may play multiple roles. Many mentors began to see themselves as quasi-parents, and several mentees saw themselves as part of a family with the mentor. In fact, the mentor was often a support for the mentee's families. (Contains 93 references.) (SLD)

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# Mentoring of Female African American Adolescents

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## Summary

The problem of this study was that inner-city African-American females have the propensity of getting lost in the educational maze and are failing to achieve their full potential in the high school system and beyond.

This study examined selected perceptions and background demographics of 14 at-risk African-American female adolescents in their relationships with one African-American female who served as their non-familial, long-term mentor. The study recorded the case of this mentor and the women who participated in an unstructured mentoring relationship that is in current progress and has lasted as long as 21 years.

The methodology in this case examined selected characteristics of 14 African-American female adolescents in their relationships with one African-American female mentor for the purpose of understanding the

factors relating to the non-familial, long-term mentoring of students. As its goal, the research focused on determining whether or not mentoring was truly effective for this study group, and if it needed to go beyond an academic focus. Additionally, it was to identify other factors that could be put into an equation that would guarantee sustained mentoring results as today's youths move into the 21st century and beyond.

The research questions addressed were:

1. What were the mentees' characteristics?
2. How do non-familial adults influence the lives and aspirations of adolescents?
3. What were the indicators of successful (effective) mentoring?
4. What were the problems confronted by the adolescent (mentees)?
5. What were the factors identified by adolescents (mentees) that contribute to empowering and viable relationships?
6. What factors were identified by the adolescents as relevant for empowerment and viability?
7. What, if any, support developed between mentees?

Salient findings that were disclosed from the interviews were the following:

1. All mentees completed high school with acceptable grade standards while some excelled as a result of the mentoring relationship.
2. Students noted that the mentor's love and compassion were 'consistently' given with a continuously expressed desire for them to go on to the highest levels of education.
3. A non-familial mentor assumes multiple roles: enforcer, sister, friend, teacher, etc.
4. Mentoring was readily identified as a dichotomy between enforcer and friend.
5. The mentor was, and continues to be, a strong and influential figure in the lives of the mentees.
6. The mentees honored an unspoken 'code of confidence'.
7. The mentor was reinforced and felt good when the mentees achieved established goals and objectives.
8. The mentor felt the greatest frustration when the mentees fell short of assuming empowerment and achieving established goals; this frustration was exacerbated when they blamed the mentor as if their irresponsibility was something she had failed to do for them.
9. The mentor was enlightened with a greater understanding as to 'why' such adolescents fail to achieve in the high school system and later in their life empowerment struggle.

10. Mentors need to be aware always that they are role models, not just in the classroom, but everywhere.
11. Participating in a mentorship is not for everyone. A mentee can tell the degree of a mentor's sincerity and genuine interest.
12. The mentor supported the mentee's emotional and cognitive development when parents/guardians were not available or knowledgeable to do so.

**Conclusions**

***The first conclusion is that non-familial mentoring of at-risk African-American female adolescents enables them to have higher life aspirations.*** This was premised on the finding that most of the mentees went on to complete high school with grade point average of 2.0 or higher as a result of the mentoring relationships (average graduating gpa of mentee's was 2.41). The mentees reported they had higher grade point averages, did not become pregnant, went on to college, and they inclusively opted not to be drug users.

An analysis of the interviews (as noted by the mentees) revealed that the mentoring relationships provided sustained self-motivation for most (71%) of the mentees, helping them to find direction in their lives while improving their scholastic grades. It also instilled them with a desire to achieve. They also reported that academic excellence was not a concern prior to meeting their mentor. Prior to mentorship, as long as

they passed their courses, they were content. Passing for many of these young women, therefore, entailed only the most rudimentary accomplishments with their putting forth only a minimal effort. Another mentee had a similar sentiment, "I would never apply myself fully because I only did what it took to get by." A significant number (86%) of the mentees made reference to the impact the mentoring had on them regarding their aspirations to attain better grades. Several of the mentees stated: "I knew I was going to graduate; it was now a concern of how was I going to graduate...what type of grades would I attain?" One of the items cited in the findings that impacted the mentees most was educational goal setting. One mentee was quoted as saying, "I finally got the message that she was sending out, that we need to have an education, and to be responsible for our actions ...that I should not be content with what I am doing ...that I need to strive for more, you know, to do better, don't be satisfied with just a little, keep trying. She has always encouraged me to go for the highest goals in life." Mentors should work to develop students' trust, encourage them to stay in school, and encourage them to identify and pursue dreams that can make them fulfilled and contributing members of society (Mandel, 1996, p. 23).

All mentees reported that the mentoring relationships changed their initial outlook on life, namely that they had acquired an optimistic vision for their future. Their comments indicated they had come to see

themselves as a viable and contributing force in society. This change indicated that the mentoring relationships, had caused changes in their level of self-esteem. All stated that they had developed positive self-esteem. Comments indicated a greater respect for themselves, acquisition of goals, and aspirations for their future lives. Responses also indicated that they developed their abilities to be analytical and reflective thinkers. The true aim of education should be not a development of one or two, but all the faculties of the human soul (Harper, 1859).

The mentor, in her response to the mentee interview questions, noted that all of the mentees were perceived as potential high school graduates; it was their academic rating that was of concern. Many of the mentees passed their classes, but it was with little or no effort. Passing for some meant receiving a D [an unsatisfactory mark] and being content. The mentor made several references to her continuous desire to assist the mentees in realizing the importance of an education and the need for the mentees to always aspire to be their very best, not for her, but for themselves. Teachers with high expectations for their students usually get far more positive results (Schorr, 1988). She stated: "What I hoped I was giving them was an extra push to change so that they would have higher aspirations." Successful mentors take personal interest in the aspirations of their mentees, encourage their ideas, and help them to

gain confidence in becoming self-directed individuals (Gray and Gray, 1985).

Today, according to literature review, it has been noted that adolescents in the United States do not get enough individual attention and guidance from adults (Floyd, 1993). This lack of support leads to alienation, low self-esteem, and poor academic achievement. Providing youths with adult support and guidance can strengthen their self-esteem and encourage them to achieve (National Media Outreach Center, 1991, p. 26). "Mentoring (Mincey & Wiener, as cited in Blechman, 1992, p. 160) is increasingly viewed as a way to fortify inner city youth against delinquency, school dropout, teen pregnancy, unemployment, and other prevalent underclass life outcomes." An effective mentor is one who sees potential in individuals when they themselves are unaware of their dormant talents (Schoor, 1978). Not only do mentors recognize latent talents, they also attempt to develop these strengths. The mentor ascertains what is needed for the mentee to reach long-range goals and motivates the mentee to continue. And it is noteworthy that many indicated that they found a desire to make personal and academic achievements in order to become mentoring powers for others. Motivation is often achieved when the mentor conveys dreams of what the future can hold for mentees if they continue to be diligent in their endeavors.

Non-familial adults whom adolescents encounter in schools (e.g. teachers, school counselors, etc.) and communities (e.g. clergy, probation

officers, etc.) can play a key role in assisting adolescents in coping and developing into healthy, fully functioning adults (Schonert-Reich, 1992, p. 2). A mentor provides the surrogate form of adult support that is physically and emotionally needed. Socioemotional support from significant others is essential for growth, change, and the healthy development of perceptions and beliefs (Harter, 1987). Researchers are beginning to note that *'high risk'* adolescents who are able to draw on a number of informal sources of support are more likely to develop in a psychologically healthier way (Werner, 1984).

***The second conclusion drawn was that a critical element in a mentor/mentee relationship is the intimacy of trust one will give and receive***. One finding that supports this is that the mentees did not break an unspoken 'code of confidence' with the interviewer or others.

The mentees, during their interviews, made several references relative to the mentor being a confidant, someone they entrusted with their secrets, dreams, accomplishments, and failures. One of the prevalent responses was that the mentor listened attentively and always kept what was shared confidentially. The mentees often cited occurrences where they shared their successes and failures with Ms. G, when they would not do this with other adults. This was a result of her unconditional acceptance of them and her desire to celebrate in their achievements, and to guide them in strategies for their avoiding further

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adversity. Many of the mentees, following the interviews, voiced a concern that they did not feel completely comfortable in disclosing information. Even though the interviewers possessed like characteristics and were approachable persons, the subjects expressed a reservation in disclosing data. The subjects thought such disclosures would be detrimental to the research or too personal to reveal. The subjects opted to keep to themselves many of the experiences that had occurred in their lives. This was part of the personal bonding that had transpired during the mentorships. The confidentiality of these instances was a forging of the mentorship intimacy. One mentee stated, "It wouldn't be fun any more ... if everybody knew everything, it would fringe on your personal time ... your shared experiences ... it's like somethings need to be kept a mystery."

Another finding for corroboration was that the mentor shares similar demographics with the participants. Therefore, it can be easily understood that if the mentor came from the same inner-city high school, was raised in the same or a comparable environment, and had been exposed to the same culturally forging values and experiences, then the mentor had to know and understand the heartbeat and pulse rate of the mentee's life-metabolism. The intimacy of the mentor/mentee relationship could be based upon a trust that developed from a perceived *common denominator*. Having been subjected to several similar

constructing forces, they were forged into a unity: as stated on our American penny and translated from the Greek *'from many ... one'* (Scott, 1978).

Both the mentor and the mentees often identified her role as an enforcer. A challenge to the mentee is often necessary. While appearing to be at the opposite end of the spectrum from support, it truly serves a supportive purpose. Sometimes it will cause dissension between the mentor and mentee. It has the tendency to create a gap that is tension producing for the mentee. Challenging entails setting tasks, engaging in discussions, constructing hypotheses, and setting high standards of expectation (Daloz, 1986).

The mentor recognized that the time she took to listen attentively to the mentees had a significant impact on the mentorship. She concurred with the responses of several of the mentees that confidentiality and trust were vital components for the mentorship to be strengthened and valued. The mentor also made note that it was necessary for her to confer with some of the mentees after their initial interviews to convey to them that it was acceptable to share different occurrences. 36% of the mentees felt that disclosing certain particulars of the mentorship would be severing an unwritten 'code of confidence' and spoiling the intimacy that existed between them and their mentor.

Literature supports that, regardless of who initiates the interaction, both the mentor and the mentee must want to participate to assure a solid foundation on which to build a good relationship. "It is a relationship that involves trust and understanding, as well as caring and warmth" (Caines, 1990, p. 453).

Galbraith & Cohen (1995, p. 6) state that for mentees truly to benefit from the help offered by a mentoring relationship, they need mentor participation that is based on mutual trust. Daloz (1986) also depicts the mentor as a *trusted* guide, one that is *trusted* to lead and to listen.

A vital role of a mentor is to be an effective listener, one who is an empathetic or responsive listener (Prison Fellowship, 1992). A mentor's willingness to listen can show people that they sincerely care. It can demonstrate that the mentor wants to understand what the mentee is experiencing. People who are emotionally hurting hide behind different types of masks to avoid being hurt more. Many times it has been noted that a mentee puts up a barrier (puts on a mask) to prevent the mentor from 'really' getting to know him/her. This is normally done due to the fear of being rejected. As the mentee comes to trust and puts credence in the mentor, he/she then may start to peel off his/her mask (Prison Fellowship, 1992, p. 16).

***The complexity of mentoring and the various roles it involves is the third conclusion.*** This was supported with the disclosure that a non-familial mentor plays multiple roles in the life of his/her mentee.

The mentees attested to the role of the mentor and perceived it as multifaceted. The mentees provided numerous responses in this aspect. The mentor was cited by the mentees as a friend most of all (86%) and secondly as a mentor (57%). There was a fairly equal distribution of perceptions of the mentor in the following capacities: sister, teacher, and guardian/mother (71%).

The mentor noted that she was different things to different mentees at different times. One of the mentor's many challenges was trying to meet the individual needs of the mentees while still accommodating her professional, personal, and spiritual needs. This in itself could have resulted in burnout and frustration if an emotional assessment of her and the mentees had not been taken into consideration. Potential non-familial mentors must assume the responsibility for evaluating both the emotional characteristics of himself/herself as well as those of the potential mentee; the alliance should be avoided if there is any possibility of a clash. Hasty assumptions here could destroy any future possibility of mentoring for the potential mentor; also, it could poison any desire on the mentees' part to ever seek such a relation again. Levinson (1978) concurs that

mentoring can be a complex, personal, and sometimes conflicting type of relationship (Prestholldt, 1990; Yonder, 1990).

The researcher notes that the mentorship involved a lot of time and commitment, both emotionally and physically. Mentoring is not appropriate for individuals not possessing commitment. "Mentors need to be people with a long-haul commitment. They need to be knowledgeable of the fact that lasting personal change usually takes time and hard work (Prison Fellowship, 1992, p.21)." Time is needed to nurture the mentor/mentee relationship because instant answers and instant successes are unlikely to occur. Mentoring normally occurs in a formal setting with standard operating processes, a set time for the mentor and mentee to interact. Unstructured, informal mentoring encompasses this and more. It often takes one beyond what is deemed the normal mentoring process for academic, professional or social success; it can elevate to informal levels that can be emotionally as well as physically draining. This is predominantly because there is no cut off point where the mentor's personal life begins and the relationship with the mentee ends. In a formalized setting there is a beginning and an ending time for this interaction.

The complexity of mentoring is derived from its multifaceted dimensions. Levinson (1978) acknowledges that mentoring is complex and developmentally important for individuals entering into adulthood.

Various functions of mentors, according to Levinson (1978), are: (a) counselors, (b) exemplars, (c) influencers, (d) host and guide, (e) teachers, and (f) supporter and facilitator. Phillips (1977) discusses additional roles of a mentor that are comparable to those referred to by Levinson. Phillips lists functions of a mentor which include the following: (a) advising and counseling, (b) career planning, (c) inspiring and role modeling, (d) instruction and training, (e) providing visibility and experiences, (f) providing friendship, (g) providing opportunities and giving of responsibilities, and (h) exposing the mentee to power and excitement through acquisition of knowledge. As one can envision, mentoring encompasses many roles.

Another role that a mentor undertakes is one of being a role model. Often the term *'mentor'* and *'role model'* (*Levinson's exemplar function*) are used interchangeably. Both are concepts based on social learning theory, but they are not synonymous. Role models are not mentors; however, mentors usually do serve as role models (Murray, 1991). The dynamics of role modeling do not require a personal relationship between the role model and the imitator; this type of relationship is by nature passive. Role modeling is based on identification; one person internalizes another's standards which are accepted as one's own. A mentoring relationship is contingent upon an interaction between two people; the contrary can be true in role modeling. There is agreement that both role

models and mentors facilitate personal growth in adolescents. Role models are usually successful individuals of one's own ethnicity, cultural background, or gender group whose behavior is studied and often modeled (Borman & Colson, 1984; Hanson, 1983; Yoder et al., 1985). On the other hand a mentor is more than a model to emulate. He or she gets involved in the daily details of the adolescent's socialization and development in education or a profession (Yoder, et al, 1985).

Mentoring not only involves an academic perspective, but also one of psychological and sociological support (*Levinson's counselor function).* "It should be approached as a developmental relationship, one that looks to social and affective as well as cognitive learning (Ianni, 1990, pp. 5-6)." It is necessary not only to help these female adolescents through their academic program (*Levinson's teacher function*), but to assist them additionally in dealing with the greater issues of life *(Levinson's supporter/facilitator function).* Both personal and academic issues need to be addressed in order to facilitate an empowered and viable life for the individual.

Kram (1985) further corroborates the complexity of mentoring by stating that mentoring relationships consist of two dimensions: an instrumental function and a psychosocial function. Instrumental functions are those which consist of coaching, providing them with challenging assignments, protecting, and providing exposure and

visibility. Psychosocial functions promote a sense of competence, clarity of identity, and effectiveness in role acquisition. These functions consist of counseling (helps the individual to explore personal concerns which may be interfering with a positive sense of self), acceptance and confirmation (the mentor and the mentee derive a sense of self from the positive regard conveyed by the other), role modeling (when the mentor's attitudes, values, and behavior provide a model for the mentee to emulate), and friendship (mutual liking, understanding, and enjoyable informal exchanges about life).

***The fourth conclusion infers that the mentor may be seen as a quasi-parent; several of the mentees began to see themselves as a family with their mentor as their mother/guardian and themselves as her children.*** This deduction was a result of the mentees readily identifying with the mentor as a family member [i.e. mother, guardian, sister].

The mentees made several references to the mentor fulfilling several roles, two of which were mother and sister. The mother figure appeared when she disciplined them; the sister figure was manifested when she listened to them attentively and gave them advice.

The mentor acknowledged the development of a family like atmosphere. Parkay (1988) adds that a mentoring relationship develops and matures with time, and that the mentor extends a quality of caring

and intimacy that one might expect to see among family members. During this family evolution other dynamics also began to emerge. Jealousy (see table 1 on pg. 19) for attention and time occurred which was a sign of sibling rivalry. The mentor was constantly reinforcing each mentee's worth and individuality in her life. The mentees often heard her saying: "...that just as a mother loves each one of her children, so do I care about each one of you." She often reinforced the mentees' special place in her life by stating: "Each mentee was their own person with their own 'personal' rapport with her, a rapport that no one could replace or displace."

The literature gave no evidence for the existence of sibling rivalry. Mentors must be aware and knowledgeable concerning the social dynamics that lead to sibling rivalry. By understanding its causes and expecting its occurrence, the mentor can disable it at the inception. The commonplace incidence of sibling rivalry leaves a valuable 'history' from which mentors can learn and not allow it to destroy his/her 'non-familial mentoring family'. The mentor can use this as a strengthening tool, a mechanism by which 'each one can reach one, and teach one [in reference to the mentees helping each other].'

***The fifth and final conclusion is that the mentor is a support factor for the family.*** The mentor in this case study supported the

mentees' emotional and cognitive development when their guardians were not available or knowledgeable to do so.

A mentee was quoted as stating "...though my mother was there for me, but she didn't know anything about higher education ... she then told me to go talk to Ms. G. Another mentee stated: "When my mother would become disgruntled as a result of my silence ... she would tell me to go talk to 'G'; if you can't talk to me, go to her." Other mentees reported, too, that when their mother or family was not there for them, Ms. G would be.

The mentor made reference in her interview response that occasionally she would worry that the family would depend on her too much; she was concerned that the family would not carry out their responsibilities to their child (attending their sporting events, scolding them for misbehavior in school, securing their applications for college entrance, payment for school sponsored activities, encouragement for higher aspirations, and educational goals, etc.).

Rosenburg (1979) highlights the critical role of parents as one of the most significant and influential relationships in the lives of children and adolescents. "Parents and kinship-based relationships continue to be the most important source of social support and care for youngsters regardless of residence or socioeconomic status, but other adults are also valued" (Ianni, 1990, p. 14).

Literature has identified many youths as having a missing link in their lives. A significant missing 'something' appears to be support from a respected adult (preferably a parent) in the lives of these youths. A mentor can be a surrogate form of this adult support that is needed socially, physically and emotionally. Harjani (1993) documents that advantages for a mentee in a mentoring relationship include the providing of a positive interactive relationship when one may be lacking at home (Richardson, 1989; Sanchez, 1990); encouragement for the mentee should be given to "break the chains of poverty and despair" (Raspberry, 1990, p. A13); and he/she should be encouraged to develop a higher self esteem (Gaines-Carter, 1989).

**Recommendations**

The following are recommendations by the researcher for further consideration and research:

1. It is recommended that a staff development be given to assist teachers in better understanding how they can and do impact the aspirations of youths that they interact with daily; they should be made to understand that this impact is powerful whether or not the teacher is aware of it. Teachers need to understand that they have an important role in helping students have higher aspirations. They serve as role models even if they are not assigned mentees. This also will provide information to African-

American women and others, helping them to better understand their roles as mentors. It is also recommended that mentoring become a part of teacher credentialing.

2. It is recommended that both mentor and mentee keep a diary. It will be invaluable in providing them both with a ready reference for accurately charting their journey and knowing where they are each step of the way, which goals they have attained and what steps have been taken to get there. This will be a good road map for future teachers who are considering mentoring, and for continued mentorships. Such mentorships will be a source of empowerment and viability for at-risk African-American female adolescents.

3. It is also recommended that, after having analyzed the emotional characteristics of one's self and others, a potential mentor (feeling qualified) should enter into the relationships and provide the mentees with much needed empowerment. Along with the feeling of empowerment, the mentor will be providing a solid basis for the mentees' development of aspirations, expectations, and a confidence that they can live outside the community (should they desire) and 'do it themselves'; with the help given by the mentor, the subject will feel confident that he/she has a future place in the mainstream of life. It should also be made known that the mentor/mentee relationship is as meaningful for the mentor as it

is for the mentee. Listening to the dialogues of different mentors, it is highly feasible that their rewards are just as great, if not greater; this is true especially when success is noted and the mentee recognizes the mentor as an intricate part of his or her accomplishments. "Being a mentor is one of the most significant relationships available in middle adulthood" (Levinson, 1978, p. 32).

4. Future mentors should be conscious that a 'code of confidence' does exist and must be honored and respected by both the mentor and the mentee. This will be an important factor that future African-American females, churches, community agencies, and teachers will need to consider in being mentors and in developing programs for mentorship. Other knowledgeable high school adults, aside from certificated teachers, can also be made aware of mentorships roles. Insight and enlightenment can be provided to career placement counselors, mentees, and researchers as well. The dissemination of information and its pragmatic assimilation is the key to getting future African-American female adolescents, who are deemed at-risk, through the academic system successfully.

5. It is recommended that a workshop for prospective teachers and other adults, who may become mentors, be given in-service on the many roles (confidant, counselor, friend,

guardian, enforcer, etc.) that one will possibly take on in a mentorship. Precautionary measures should also be given for one to avoid burnout which will occur if an emotional 'check and balance' is not maintained for all involved parties. Also it is recommended that an individual not enter into a mentoring relationship if, after careful personal evaluation, burnout is likely or imminent. It is further recommended that community agencies and schools have potential non-familial mentors examine their emotional make-up as well as that of the potential mentee; they then should avoid a mentoring relationship if such will result in serious conflicts which will threaten and likely destroy the relation. "Over-dependence, jealousy, ethical disagreements, and personal disagreements may be counted among the disadvantages of mentoring; also, these are situations in which negative mentoring and unsatisfactory mentors occur" (Caine, 1990, p. 454).

6. It is recommended that sibling rivalry [jealousy] be taken into the equation of understanding by the potential mentor. This is a vital phenomenon of which future agencies should signal an alert to their mentors. The mentor must be knowledgeable in dealing with this from its inception or all concerned will be damaged and it is

likely to be permanent. Knowledge of this will enable one to use it to his/her advantage and promote higher aspirations. It also can lead to self-awareness and empowerment of the mentee. The mentee will be made to realize that there is no real sibling rivalry: the true conflict is within self (jealousy); it is an insecurity toward their self-worth. Insecurity of mentor or mentee is noted as one of the disadvantages of mentoring (see table 1 pg. 19). Realizing their value and worth as viable individuals will alleviate this conflict and possibly provide an opportunity for the development of a future mentor.

7. It is suggested that a future article be written about the existence and dynamics of 'sibling rivalry' (rivalry among the family unit of the mentorship) in mentoring relationships.

8. It is recommended that the mentor work closely with the family in guiding the mentee. The mentor should become a support to the family unit instead of its replacement. "Mentoring will always be effective only insofar as it accommodates, transform, vitiates, or expands, the influences of family, school, community or job (Ascher, 1988)." The mentor should communicate on a regular basis with the family to solicit their physical support of the mentee at school activities. Counseling sessions on effective communication involving all parties (mentee, mentee's family and

the mentor) is another suggestion for getting the family to work with the mentor.

**Epilogue**

Esoteric in nature, the demands and constraints of mentoring must be understood in the light of its quasi-atomic structure where research evidences that, while it may appear to be simple, it breaks down into detailed molecules reflecting differing facets and characteristics (Scott, 1979). It is important to understand these facets in a lucid manner so that entry into a mentoring role will be based not upon 'obvious' assumptions, but upon clear researched conclusions. It is also the intent of the researcher to show the interrelations of these conclusive findings so that future potential mentors can more readily examine them in the light of their own personalities, natural gifting, and the strengths and weaknesses of culturally acquired traits to determine whether this type of relationship will be destructive to the mentor, mentee, or both; the destructive effects could radiate beyond both of them to other siblings, and even the mentor's or mentee's immediate families. Also, it is to help the potential mentor to appraise whether he or she will enter into the commitment and, because of the complexity and depth of any long term human relationship, be drained of emotional and physical reserves. This could easily cause the mentor to fail to his or her own expectations after giving the mentee high aspirations. If the mentor falls

short of bringing the relationship to meaningful fruition at this point, it could leave the protégé in an emotional and psychological upheaval. For, after all, we have already amply addressed the fact that the protégés began their lives in society with 'potentially mentoring relationships' in the family, in peerships, in church settings that were stillborn? The failure of those relationships to develop into full mentorships is the reason adolescents are now in psychological and psychosomatic turmoil (chronicled daily in all of our metropolitan newspapers), seeking peace and hope in alcoholic and drug induced states of mind. They have found their own form of 'mentorship' in the vain attempt to find the emotional, psychological, social, and personal caring that can only come from a mature, respected, and competent human being. And, to the sentient nature of these young charges, as we provide the emotional, psychological, and social support, we can add the academics so that the young mentees will have empowerment and viability in society.

Overall, it was found that mentees learned to make choices and lost their temerity for making them. They found a place of acceptance and learned that a human being could care for them and, at the same time, be a competent and accurate compass by whom they could set their bearings in life. This was a new thrill and excitement for them. They learned to rely on a type of guide, a visionary (Schoor, 1978). They had found someone who is able to see potential in individuals when they

themselves are unaware of their latent talents, someone to lead them on a definite road that would, for a change, take them somewhere other than downwards. They were moving out and upwards to real future objectives. They had learned to accept a love that, for a change, could only benefit them. Platonic and yet intense emotions were new for most of them. And it all resulted in the impetus that made them know they could live outside their community, be empowered and someday help others to receive that vibrant and needed empowerment. ***"All people need to pass through a period of discipline and pupilage before they can really enjoy and manage liberty and independence (Blyden, 1865)."***

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